



MAIN LIBRARY



B SA54s

149692

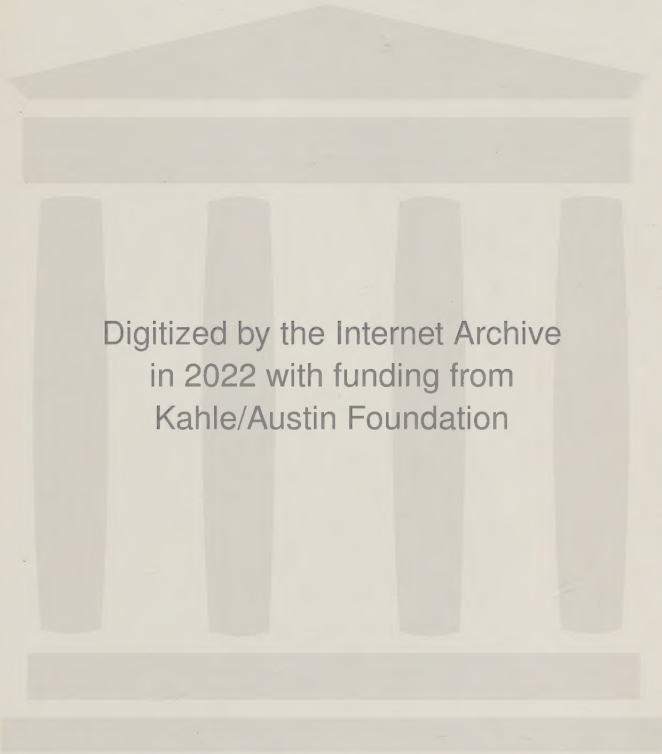
SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1223 00365 7179







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation







KATE SANBORN



# KATE SANBORN

JULY 11, 1839

JULY 9, 1917

BOSTON  
*McGRATH-SHERRILL PRESS*

1918

B  
Sa 544

149692

149692 00365 7179

3 1223 00365 7179

**I**T might be said of Miss Sanborn that her best memorial is the impression that she left upon the minds of those who knew her. No attempt at a formal written memorial would satisfy the friends who cherish the memory of her living presence. But Miss Sanborn had an unusual number of friends, many of whom may value the reproductions of her photographs and a brief sketch of her life. She was a pioneer in opening the paths of independent work for women, and her success was remarkable and inspiring. It seems worth while also for all memoirs to be preserved that help to illustrate the influence of the Puritan stock by which New England was peopled. While Miss Sanborn in her volume of "Memories and Anecdotes" has given a series of pictures of her experience, she kept herself in the background, and there is still opportunity to recall the personal factor which was the chief secret of her success.

In making this sketch of Miss Sanborn's life it was felt that she would not have wished anything to be written about her that was solemnly formal or tinged with melancholy. Her character was remarkably reflected in her features and bearing and for that reason a number of her photographs taken at different times have been used. Nothing was more characteristic of Miss Sanborn than her loyal attachment to her family and friends. It would hardly be possible to depict her life without some description and pictures of those to whom she was most closely related. Special attention has been given to her early associations because that part of her life is least known to her friends, and its story brings out her genial philosophy of living as well as the spirit in which she made her way to a career of rare achievement.

EDWIN W. SANBORN

136 West 44th Street  
New York City





# KATE SANBORN

**I**N estimating all that has been given to the nation by the old New England stock, it is generally recognized that the women played at least as important a part as the men. But the mental picture of the early New England women is a composite photograph, a picture of a type which commands respect for its unselfish toil and devotion at home. We think of few instances where young women born in a New England village went out into the world like the traditional New England boy and made their own way by native humor, versatility, energy and intellectual force. Yet the inheritance of such natural gifts was the only capital with which Miss Sanborn began her career, and she always acknowledged the debt to her New England ancestry and associations. She specially admired the character of her mother's grandfather Captain Ebenezer Webster, a fine type of the New England pioneer. As a young man he fought with the famous Rogers' Rangers in the French and Indian Wars — at Crown Point, Ticonderoga, in Canada, and on many expeditions into the northern wilderness. When the French wars were over he cleared a farm in the wilderness, where wolves howled and Indians planned their raids, and built a log cabin of which his son Daniel said that its smoke rose nearer the frontier of Canada than that of any other settler. "When the alarm of war with England sounded," to

quote from Senator Lodge, "among the first to respond was the old ranger and Indian fighter Ebenezer Webster. In the town which had grown up near his once solitary dwelling, he raised a company of two hundred men, and marched at their head, a splendid looking leader, dark, massive and tall, to join the forces at Boston." He inherited what was known as the Batchelder complexion, of which General Stark remarked with a grin that it was useful for a soldier, as no amount of gunpowder could blacken it.

His company guarded the headquarters of Washington at Dorchester Heights and the General called him into consultation. At Bennington he was remembered as saying to his men, "We must get nearer, boys," while they were working their way through the brush in the manner of Indian fighters. Miss Sanborn kept as sacred relics a pair of shoe buckles which he wore when going over the breastworks of the British and Hessians at the head of his men. At West Point when Arnold's treachery was discovered, General Washington sent for Ebenezer Webster to guard his tent, saying with a smile, "Captain Webster, I think I can trust you." It is a tradition that Washington, distracted over the treason of Arnold, paced back and forth for most of the night, biting nervously at the knotted head of a heavy hickory stick.

His neighbors trusted Captain Webster as his general had done, and gave him every office in their gift. He was prompt, resolute and determined, but as Daniel

Webster testified, he was also good-humored and facetious. "He was religious, but not sour, having a heart that he seemed to have borrowed from a lion."

Of the value of inheritance of character from such a man, Senator Lodge says, "There were splendid sources of strength in this man, the outcome of such a race, from which his children could draw. Force of will, force of mind, force of character ; these were the three predominant qualities in Ebenezer Webster."

Captain Webster's son, Ezekiel Webster, was gifted with the same tall, straight, massive figure, and the same fine traits of character. The lines of his face were marks of refinement and distinction. Though energetic and determined, he was hampered by modesty and reserve. Cap'n Eb. used to say that "Ezekiel couldn't tell half he knew, but Daniel could tell more than he knew." Ezekiel Webster was slow in pushing himself forward as a public man, but at the time of his early death he was a leader of the bar in northern New England, and among the most distinguished citizens of that region.

To consider one's own mother as the best mother that ever lived is the natural impulse of every one. Miss Sanborn was particularly loyal in that sentiment. Her mother, Mary Webster Sanborn, one of the two daughters of Ezekiel Webster, was a beautiful, dainty, refined woman who had all the religious fervor of New England, the unselfish devotion to family and to every sense of duty, without any trace of harshness

or narrowness. She was gifted with gentle humor and a sense of proportion, with a rare fund of human sympathy. In a natural, neighborly way she carried help to all who were poor or sick or disheartened. Even now, more than fifty years after her death, there are old citizens at Hanover who are deeply affected at any reminder of her friendship, as if by a personal loss of yesterday. Mrs. Sanborn had marked intellectual tastes and wrote for many publications of her time. She understood the impulsive temperament of her talented daughter Kate, and furnished just the right touch of sympathy and encouragement.

On her father's side Miss Sanborn was equally indebted to her New England ancestry. Her father, Edwin D. Sanborn, was for nearly fifty years a professor in Dartmouth College except for a few years' connection with the Washington University at St. Louis. In his later life his department was that of English literature. Professor Sanborn was a big man in body and mind. He had broad views, practical common sense, and direct methods of thought and action. He was one of the old type of college professors whose strong personality and natural gift of imparting knowledge impressed themselves on the pupil. If he had a weakness it was in the way of closing the eye which happened to be turned toward the escapades and delinquencies of the young men. He made every effort to help them to go on with their education. He was a living library of learning, but was at his





EZEKIEL WEBSTER



best when pouring forth his funds of information in informal talks. He was beloved as well as respected by half a hundred classes of college students.

Professor Sanborn's father was a worthy example of the early New England farmer. He gradually acquired one tract of land after another in the town of Gilman-ton until he owned the equivalent of a square mile of hill farms. He had taught school as a young man and was specially proud of his penmanship. His love letters addressed to Miss Hannah Hook, who became his wife, are beautiful specimens of old-fashioned penmanship, as perfect as copperplate. One would have no hesitation in exhibiting this courtship correspondence, as every letter began with the words "Honoured Madam," and the formal sentiments were in keeping with that style of address. Hannah Hook Sanborn's father, "Gransir" Hook, was an ancestor whom Miss Sanborn loved in memory as much as she admired Captain Eb. Webster. Gransir Hook was the soul of quaint, earthy, New England humor and jolly good nature. He was a living confirmation of the "laugh and grow fat" adage, and his testimony continued even after his life had ended. He had been for many years confined to the house, and to remove the prodigious casket after the funeral it was necessary to cut away the wall at one side of the front door.

In tributes of one kind or another which Miss Sanborn received during her life and in letters of sympathy written after her death, the adjective most commonly

applied to her was the word "unique." The blending of traits which came to her from the ancestors so briefly sketched may interest Miss Sanborn's friends as explaining the unusual combination of qualities in her character, especially her driving energy and a restless aspiration to acquire knowledge and to accomplish something worth while ; also a friendly, helpful interest in people about her, combined with quick wit and a saving sense of humor.

Lest it might appear that with these gifts it was easier for a girl of that time to make her way in the world than for the thousands of young women who are now facing the problems of active life, it should be considered that the difficulties which confronted a young woman at that time were more serious than now ; difficulties that one can hardly understand who never lived in the grim and severe atmosphere of the old-fashioned New England village.

Until after the middle of the nineteenth century the homespun idea in rural New England was still the key to everything in life and character. Only a few ambitious young men were prompted to go out into the world. Except for Boston and a few smaller cities, the outside world was little different from the world at home. Following a habit of two hundred years it had become the natural practice for young people merely to remove from the paternal farm to another similar farm not far away. Each household, like each community was self-sustaining. The "independent





*From a daguerreotype*

MISS SANBORN AT AN EARLY AGE



farmer " was really independent. He produced his own food and clothing. He drew sweetness from sugar maples and dipped light from tallow. He made his own sleds, brooms, medicines, and often his own tools, rope, shingles, boxes, barrels, and furniture. Miss Sanborn did much of her writing at a desk of " curly " maple which Captain Ebenezer Webster made for his own use after he became a judge and a man of business affairs. She also had an extraordinary combination in mahogany of bureau, cabinet, and bookcase, made by Deacon Long of Hanover. In the Sanborn home as late as 1870 candle moulds stood on shelves at the head of the cellar stairs. Down cellar in a dry, soft atmosphere of pleasing mystery, redolent of Baldwins, Pearmain, and Russets, the flickering candle light fell on shelves of homemade preserves or on a great bin of potatoes which must require " sprouting " from the boys of the family on Saturday afternoons in the inviting weather of springtime. There were piles of pumpkins, squashes, and other potential sources of pie. One who was sent down cellar to consult the pork barrel had to be careful not to stumble over or into a long, deep tub of soft soap. A barrel of cider passed through its seasonal phases — the too brief period of snap and tang when the new cider might be drawn through a straw ; the hard cider stage when medicinal doses might be withdrawn by mature members of the family favored with signs of

rheumatism ; and the final lapse into the austere maturity of vinegar.

Upstairs in the kitchen the walls under the ceiling were bordered with great pieces of dried beef hanging from hooks and with festoons of dried apples. Out in the back yard forty cords of wood stood in long piles to carry the household through the rigors of winter. Farmers from over in Vermont hauled in the wood in cordwood lengths upon sleds, the sleds being drawn by oxen, driven with much vociferation up the long hill from the river. A dozen of these sleds stood where the principal streets of the village crossed, offering an open market where citizens might buy maple, birch, beech, and other hardwood fuels, at an average of \$4.00 a cord. In the first half of the nineteenth century several mechanical inventions came into use, but in the opinion of the boys of that time the most important of all was the sawing machine which moved from one house to another, and by horse power sawed up the family cord wood. The privilege of splitting and piling the wood, and of serving it to the voracious stoves and open fires still remained. The sawing machine is an illustration of the fact that in the early times even the factories came to the individual home, completing the sufficiency of home life and diverting the mind from the leaving of home. Even if one wished to get away, travel was no easy matter, particularly for those living north of White River Junction. Railroad trains were drawn by small, asthmatic



locomotives having large smokestacks shaped like an inverted volcano. Delays were frequent to slake the thirst of the engine and to replenish the itinerant woodpile which served as fuel. The cars had low, flat roofs and small, cinder-cemented windows and were but little better ventilated than the drawing room cars of the present day. Indeed, the thought of travel was still affected, through suggestion, by the Concord Coach idea. The Concord coach is even now lumbering in hundreds of villages between Main Street and the depot. It presents one of two pictures to the mind. We see it rattling along at a jog trot pace, swaying and creaking and enveloped in a cloud of dust; or else it is dragging slowly on a heavy road, the spokes of its wheels painfully lifting huge loads of dripping mire and mud. Mud or dust always goes with a Concord coach. To successive generations travel had come to mean doing time for one livelong day after another in a stage coach; and this mental attitude had made the stay-at-home habit the more persistent.

Of course Hanover was different from other places in being a New England village plus a college; but the effect was to intensify rather than to modify the prevailing scheme of things. As late as 1850 all the colleges of New England were "seats of learning" of the old-fashioned sort. At the opening of the academic year the country colleges welcomed the candidates for matriculation, some of whom still arrived on a

farm wagon, drawn by the horse which could be most easily spared from farm work, and bearing the blessing of their mothers and the seed-cakes of their grandmothers. Chapel exercises were held before daylight in midwinter, in chapels lighted by candles and heated by the Aurora Borealis. A chronic form of suicide, known as "boarding one's self," was not uncommon among the students. The lack of amusements and of rational forms of exercise led to such laborious forms of pleasantries as gathering the blinds and gates of the village upon the campus or the elevation of a horse or cow to the college belfry.

The close connection of the college with the rural life about it appeared at commencement week when hundreds of farmers drove in from miles around and hitched their horses along the Cemetery Lane. At one end of the campus (then called the common), in the College Church, were performed the solemn ceremonies of commencement. Everything suggested local sentiment and strong individuality of mind and person. The trustees were venerable and distinguished men, each accustomed to go his own gait. Their methods of procedure were so eccentric and centrifugal that the master of ceremonies found it no easy task to round them up for the formal procession to the church. Even at the steps of the sacred edifice, with a sweltering congregation within anxiously awaiting their arrival, they often blocked the parade by stopping to greet friends upon the side lines. When



MISS SANBORN IN GIRLHOOD



they finally made their way up the steps with a clatter of canes and crutches, the courtly marshal had generally reached a state of profane exasperation. No less than twenty-four members of the graduating class took part in the exercises of commencement, their performances consisting of discourses in Greek and Latin, Orations and "Forensic Disputations." At the further end of the campus was a line of booths where lemonade, popcorn and other refreshments were sold and where the usual features of a country fair attracted a crowd of visitors. Dogs and small boys from rival districts engaged in disputations which were not always forensic.

The life of families connected with the college was not very different from that in other villages. The professors owned large gardens or small farms and their spare time was fully occupied with the outdoor and indoor cares of the family. Dwellers in the apartments of the cities can form no idea of the cares of housekeeping in the days of old. Queer, quaint things were constantly happening, often trivial or ridiculous, but going to make up a vivid record of household history. The localized spirits of fire and water were always busy. Pipes froze in winter and were parched by the droughts of summer. The big chimney in the middle of Professor Sanborn's house was at once his reliance for comfort and the disturber of his peace. When the alarm arose that "the chimney is on fire," the family rushed to the leather fire buckets which

hung in the front hall. They formed a fire line and passed up water to protect the shingle roof. Salt must be carried up and poured down the flues. In the autumn vast colonies of chimney swallows made themselves at home in the big chimney. Once when a fire was started early in the season they became confused by the smoke. Hundreds of them tumbled down and came out through the fireplace into the family parlor. In the morning the carpet was covered with several inches of soot, and the chairs, "what-not," and Miss Kate's Hallett & Davis piano were by no means neglected. At another time in the sepulchral silence of a winter night the family were aroused by a faint, ghostly tinkle of the front door bell. The next night the uncanny sound was repeated. The head of the house arose, armed himself with an iron poker and opened the front door. Snow was gently falling but there was no trace of footprints. Even while he stood there shivering, the bell rang again as if to mock his efforts. The house seemed fated to become as famous for supernatural disturbances as that of the eminent theologian in Massachusetts whose abode was haunted so long by mysterious noises, rappings and overturnings of furniture. The bell knob on the front door was connected by a wire with the bell near the kitchen ceiling, hanging at the end of a coil. The bell wire ran just over a shelf in the closet at the head of the cellar stairs. The rats had opened a passageway through the walls on either side and were using this shelf as





MISS SANBORN'S BIRTHPLACE AND EARLY HOME  
IN HANOVER



a nocturnal thoroughfare, setting the wire in motion in their hasty passage. Such whimsical happenings would be out of place even in an informal sketch of Miss Sanborn's life, except for the fact that they appealed to her sense of humor and helped to develop her power of telling stories. It was the common and amusing incidents of daily life that furnished material for her earliest efforts as a writer. To write in a sensible and amusing way about matters of everyday life in which people were really interested was then something of an innovation. The ordinary tone of writing was stilted and full of mild moralizing. For a chance example, in a magazine article of 1852 describing the wearing apparel of early New England, we note after a description of the shoes of the period that "while appendages for the feet are properly provided, true ornaments of the mind and heart should not be neglected." It was the first evidence of Miss Sanborn's initiative that in this formal atmosphere she marked out for herself a new field of literary work by close observation of what was going on about her and by describing it in a novel style that was fresh, natural and full of animation.

In recalling her early memories, Miss Sanborn wrote: "I can't quite go back to quiltings, spinning bees, 'singing meetings,' and spelling matches, or to the shoemakers who went from house to house with bench and lapstone, making a supply of shoes for the whole family, nor to the invaluable tailoress who car-

ried her goose and pressboard, but I distinctly do recall the dressmaker, who came to us with big shears (I can still feel them clipping round my neck) and brass thimble without a top; who made our dresses for twenty-five cents a day; and considering the creations evolved, I think she was too well paid. Money was precious and scarce, but I knew nothing of the miserly scrimping and meanness that are often allied to close economy. Nor did I see aught but the rosy side of farm life in my girlhood. The farmers who came to our door with their produce to sell were our friends and benefactors, well-to-do, 'forehanded,' and 'good providers' for their own families. Two of these I remember with real affection. The first was Uncle Daniel Farnum, tall, lank, 'lean-favored', with a twinkling eye and a ready smile. He called potatoes 'short sass;' carrots, beets, etc., 'long sass;' and spoke of steaks and chops as 'low meats' in distinction from roasts. In his bounteous hospitality he was always urging us to 'come over' in sugaring-off time, cherry time, plum time, hulled-corn time, beechnut time, molasses-candy time, etc.—a calendar of goodies for the entire year. He inclined to an alphabetical arrangement of his family, and at table he would say in his hearty way, 'Hannah A., pass the butter; Abner B., run down cellar and draw a little cider; Ella C, help Kate to cottage cheese made to hum; Polly D., you tend to that pie.' He became at last a little crazed by the Millerite doctrine, and, prudently willing his prop-



MISS SANBORN AS A YOUNG WOMAN





erty to his wife, he prepared to go up. Alcott used to say, 'Each one may decide when he will ascend,' and dear Uncle Daniel had that conviction in a literal fashion. One evening he donned his white robe of departure — his 'going-away gown' — and mounted to the ridge-pole; but receiving no supernal summons nor assistance, returned to his anxious family to await orders.

"The second stand-by was white-haired, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed Father Newton, a veritable Cheer-yle brother, who came twice a week with goodies, and whom I often visited. Oh, the delights of taking tea there, and the sense of repletion that followed! Oh, those big raised biscuits, the three kinds of sauce, four or five varieties of cake, and always pie in astounding variety! — and why not pie when one can get such pies? Beecher knew what he was talking about when he said: 'Apple pie should be eaten while it is yet florescent, white or creamy yellow, with the merest drip of candied juice along the edges; of a mild and modest warmth; the sugar suggesting jelly, yet not jellied; the morsels of apple neither dissolved nor yet in original substance, but hanging, as it were, between the spirit and the flesh of applehood.'

"And do you understand me when I refer to a 'pandowdy' and a 'brown Betty'? If not, I condole with you. I would walk ten miles tonight to get again the robust welcome, the exuberant happiness, the old-fashioned sincerity, not omitting the well-spread table,

of those old-time visits. It has been the lasting remembrance of such delights that made me aspire to a farm and a country home; and my highest ambition socially is to make my dear friends as happy around my table as I used to be when a guest at 'Jericho'."

While the wholesome pleasures of country living were enjoyed and appreciated, no one had dreamed of the developments of the present time in the way of outing clubs, winter sports, winter carnivals, and systematic nature study. The boys collected birds' eggs and thought they had reached a high plane as scientific collectors if they refrained from taking away the entire domestic establishment of the birds. The girls pressed leaves and flowers, but the study of botany was almost neglected, and few of the residents of the village ever sought an opportunity to peep through the telescope of the college observatory. Veeries and hermit thrushes every evening in the late spring and early summer chanted their marvelous antiphonal music from pine-clad slopes across the "Vale of Tempe," but very few people thought of walking up to attend this concert or knew the names of the performers. Few could identify more than a dozen of the commonest trees or had made a careful study of wild flowers or shrubs.

That the sense of natural advantages was not broader and deeper was due no doubt in part to the confined outlook caused by primitive means of locomotion. It seemed too much to ask of the faithful family horse

or of the over-worked livery beast to climb the pinnacle of Pineo Hill, only a few miles from town, or to drag through the sands of the River Road for a dozen miles to the village of Thetford Hill, from which a beautiful view of the Connecticut Valley and of the northern mountains might be enjoyed. In the modern era of good roads, one who goes back for a summer visit, and is invited by a friend to whirl about in his car may in half an afternoon visit more of these fair Carcassones than he ever dreamed of seeing throughout his life at Hanover. There was an occasional opportunity to get a little instruction upon subjects outside the formal routine of school and college. Professor Mark Bailey came up from New Haven to give lessons in elocution, and soon after the Bissell gymnasium was opened, the Yale instructor in athletics came to Hanover and in addition to his work with the students, formed classes in calisthenics among the people in the village. A large number appeared for a time on the floor of the gymnasium and went through the movements with rings, wands and wooden dumbbells, but the interest was not of long duration.

Beside the college library and a circulating library for children, there were good book stores in town. Through the Hanover Pamphlet Association the magazines of the day, such as *Littell's Living Age*, *Punch*, *Harper's*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*, were passed around from house to house, and there was a similar club for the new books worth reading. Mag-

azines and books were wrapped in a cover upon which was marked the length of time, one week or two weeks, for which the reading matter might be kept. It was then sent on to the nearest neighbor whose name was on the list.

Perhaps the rarest privilege that Hanover offered was the association with men and women of culture, character and strong individuality. The enforced economy of professors in the college made the ornamentation of their homes a matter of slight concern. In the home of Professor Sanborn few objects of art can be recalled other than discarded whale-oil lamps on the mantel and a few sea shells brought back by a missionary to the Orient. A religious publication called the *Christian Union*, an ancestor of the *Outlook*, aroused great interest by the announcement that it would give to every subscriber two pictures which should be triumphs of the newly perfected art of making chromos. The two chromo pictures were entitled *Wide Awake* and *Fast Asleep*, and when they arrived were carefully installed in the dining room. Both of these phrases might well be applied to the Hanover of 1860. In the seclusion of a winter six months long and six feet deep, the outlook from a morning window revealed a scene of hibernation. No sign of life except pillars of smoke rising straight up from chimneys around the common. No sign of movement until the snow plow came nosing its way along the sidewalk and opened the path to the postoffice. Some of the



MARY W. SANBORN





“advanced thinkers” of the time might have charged that the intellectual life of the place was not wide awake. But even if narrow it was surely awake. If thought was not as broad as at the present time, it was perhaps as deep. In a small group of intellectual persons of neighborly disposition and vitally interested in the best things, the friendships were full of satisfaction. There were interesting and stimulating people, some of them educational institutions in themselves. President Nathan Lord, a rugged old Roman, ranked with the best of the great college presidents. He not only had the power of imparting his sturdy traits to other individuals, but stamped them upon the college itself. The professors were forceful characters and interesting neighbors. In a chapter on “Bygones” Miss Sanborn said of the Dartmouth teachers :

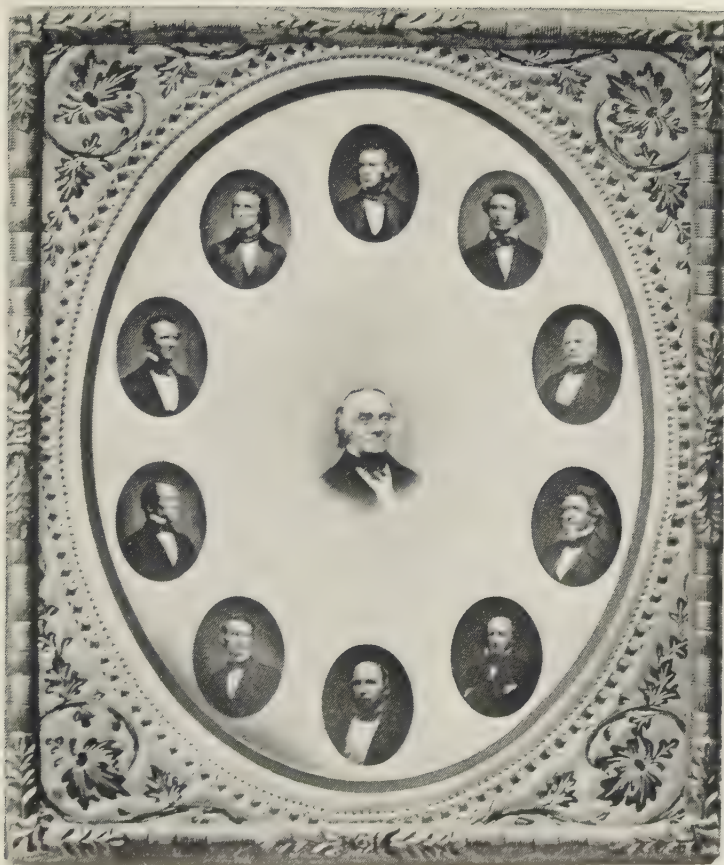
“ College professors in a fresh-water college had but starvation salaries. How did they manage to live comfortably on fifteen hundred dollars a year, entertaining willingly and generously the anxious parents of wild students, ministers who exchanged, agents for various societies, commencement orators, and stray missionaries ; as well as to give class parties, supply themselves with needed books, and educate their families ? One of the trustees had but three hundred dollars per year as a pastor ; yet he lived well, kept a horse and cow, and educated three children. Of course, they could not afford to travel much.

“ I remember one professor saying of an associate

instructor: 'John needs to travel to rub off sharp corners and broaden his views. If he could only get to White River Junction, or possibly as far as Thetford, it would be an immense advantage.' But those same professors, overworked, underpaid, restricted by narrow incomes and narrower codes of life, were scholars and heroes, and knew how to make men out of the rough, gawky material sent from the even poorer families in New Hampshire and Vermont."

Among other residents of the village Dr. Dixie Crosby was an ideal example of the old-time country doctor. Skilled in his profession, full of practical wisdom and story-telling humor, his visits made a moderate attack of illness seem like an enviable experience. There could have been no more charming or lovable neighbor than Professor Putnam, to whom Miss Sanborn paid a beautiful tribute in her book of *Memories and Anecdotes*. The eloquent Professor Patterson, who had become a senator at Washington, brought home absorbing stories from the center of national life.

There was an occasional function at Hanover which showed perhaps better than any other the neighborly cooperation of the people and the versatility of their talent. This was called an "illumination" and was observed only on rare occasions such as an important anniversary or the celebration of a Civil War victory. There was a torch-light procession in the evening and every window of every house on the line of the parade was illuminated. The light was furnished by a



THE FACULTY AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE IN THE 'FIFTIES

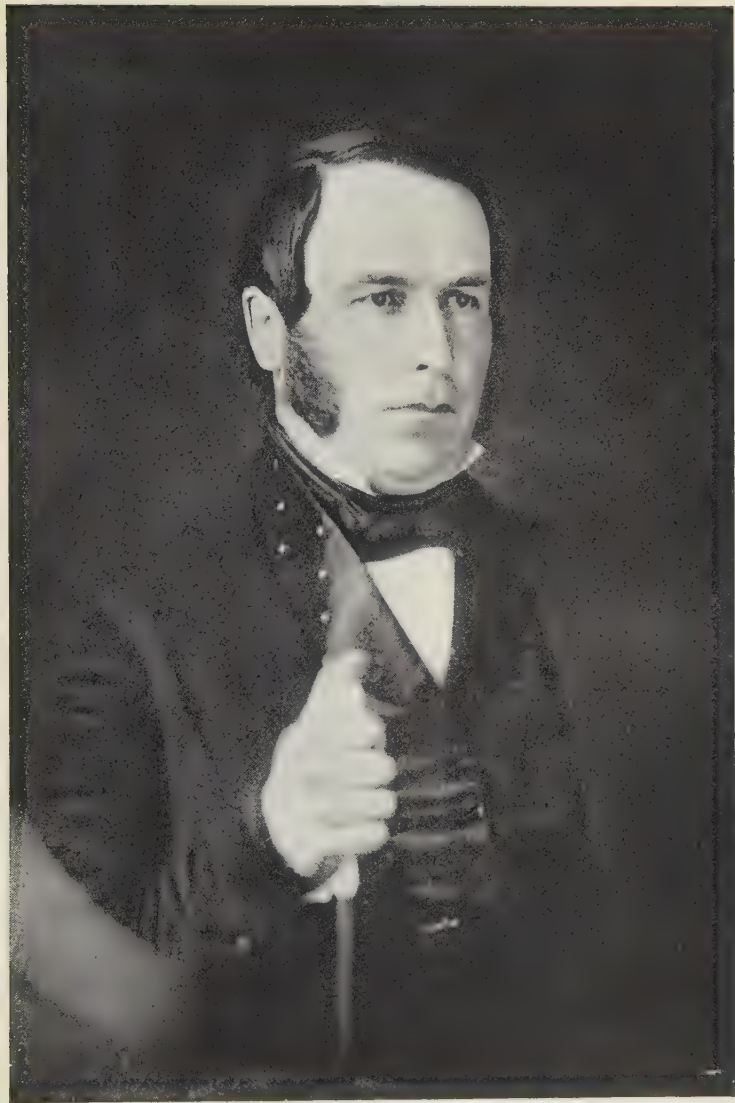


short tallow candle standing on a three-cornered bit of tin plate which was fastened to the sash at the middle of the window. The *Illuminati* within were kept busy running from one window to another to trim the candles, keep them in place, and prevent their setting fire to the shades or curtains. A local band at the head of the procession played patriotic airs. Prominent citizens were called out to the porches of their homes to make speeches; and they were as good speeches as could be heard anywhere — easy, scholarly, witty, and eloquent. It seldom failed that a flaring candle in at least one house set fire to something; and the Hanover Hook and Ladder Company was then evoked to make the affair complete. On such occasions, as well as in their daily life, the people were influenced by a friendly, community feeling. The village illuminations were hardly worthy to hold a candle to the blaze of lights of every late winter afternoon in a range of great, modern office buildings. But those illuminations are made by electric machinery at a central station. The office boy or janitor turns on the light by pushing a button. In the social life of Hanover every individual kept his own light trimmed and burning. There was the advantage which belongs to people of homogeneous stock, all inheriting the same traditions, all having the same fine and worthy aims, all leading the same sort of life, but every one doing his work in a characteristic, individual way.

Some of the remarkable men described in the *Mem-*

*ories and Anecdotes* returned to Hanover at certain seasons to deliver courses of lectures. One of them was Dr. Benning Crosby who had reached the front rank among the surgeons of New York when his life was cut short. In his professional visits he seldom needed to use any other medicine than the smile and the stories that he brought into the sick room. When a family needed to be cheered up he could convulse them by imitating and impersonating some local character who happened to be passing the house. If a dignified personage was approaching to make a call, Dr. Ben would depict in exact detail just what the visitor was about to do and say. And this was done in such a way, even in the presence of the victim, that no one could take offence. Other such visitors were the learned and golden-tongued Dr. Ordronaux and Dr. John Lord, the brilliant and eccentric lecturer on history. On academic occasions, and especially at commencement, there were many alumni who enjoyed coming back for a visit at Hanover — such men as “Uncle Sam.” Taylor, of the Andover Phillips Academy, in education; “Long John” Wentworth of Chicago among men of affairs; and General Noyes, Governor of Ohio and Minister to France, as a representative of public life. Men of this stamp coming in a vacation spirit and enjoying stimulating talks liked to meet together at Professor Sanborn’s, on the vine-covered piazza, or in the big “study” which occupied a wing of the house, with domed ceiling and with





*From a daguerreotype*

PROFESSOR EDWIN D. SANBORN



the old picture wall paper exhibiting scenes around the Bay of Naples. Their stories, rallies, monologues, and Homeric laughter were worthy of a classic setting. Miss Kate as a girl and a young woman was a welcome listener at such times and contributed witty pictures of local characters and happenings as well as bright comments on current literature.

Even during the long summer vacation interesting people came to Hanover. It was a tribute to the place as a summer resort that they continued to come in spite of the hardships and vicissitudes of life at Frary's Hotel. Among these summer visitors or residents were John E. Parsons, one of the acute leaders of the New York bar, and Mr. Hitchcock, proprietor of the Fifth Avenue Hotel. They sought recreation on the common in front of the Sanborn House with Professor Young, the astronomer, who came from his studies of the celestial spheres to concentrate his mind on croquet balls. Other visitors who stirred the imaginations of young people at Hanover were the famous personages who came as orators or poets at commencement or as features of the Lecture Course. Of those who were entertained at her father's home, Miss Sanborn mentions Rufus Choate, Edward Everett, Franklin Pierce, Salmon P. Chase, Wendell Phillips, Dr. Holmes, Edward Everett Hale, President Eliot, James T. Fields, Charles Dudley Warner, Edwin P. Whipple, Walt Whitman, John G. Saxe, and Joachim Miller.

In accounting for the remarkable men and women

sent out from rural New England about the middle of the nineteenth century it is necessary to consider all these three factors, of inheritance, environment, and the influences that filtered in from the outside world. It seems to be the general conclusion of historical writers that the greatest of these was inheritance. From secluded farms where there was almost no stimulus from without and very little chance for education, there came forth national figures of which Horace Greeley is an example. The Hanover region was favored in being a fairly fertile country along the Connecticut River, where the struggle for a livelihood was not too repressing, and in being the seat of two educational institutions, Dartmouth College and the Norwich Military Academy just across the river in Vermont. These attracted a supply of the material for successful careers, but the result seemed to be a fruition of long continued moral, physical, and intellectual forces. At a dinner of the New Hampshire Society in New York it was undertaken to show in a jocular way that men who had lived or were educated within twenty miles of the town pump on the Hanover Common had done more to influence the destiny of the American nation than those living or educated within the same radius of the City Hall in New York. In this David and Goliath competition the smaller champion at least was not annihilated. At the first great crisis, the mind of the nation was prepared to meet the onslaught of disunion by Daniel Webster.

When the Civil War, deferred to a more favorable time, at last broke out, the sinews of war were developed by men from within the Hanover circle. The entire financial legislation of Congress from 1861 to 1865 might be said to be the work of Justin S. Morrill, a resident of Strafford, just across the Connecticut. The financing of bond issues and the control of the national treasury were under the charge of Salmon P. Chase, born near Hanover and graduated at Dartmouth. Thaddeus Stevens furnished the element of bitter and indomitable persistence. Both Dartmouth and the military school at Norwich supplied an extraordinary proportion of men to the active service; several of the Dartmouth men reaching the rank of brigadier-general. The honor roll of the Norwich University in the Civil War numbered over five hundred officers, of whose careers that of General Grenville M. Dodge was a noble example. To the navy the Norwich school furnished three rear-admirals, four commanders, and a host of other officers.

When a crisis came in the foreign policy of the nation at the time of the Spanish War, Nelson Dingley filled the position which Morrill had occupied in 1861. When President McKinley wanted guidance on the momentous issues involved, he sent to Cuba Senator Redfield Proctor on whose judgment he relied and on whose report his decision was based. The man of action in that war, Admiral Dewey, though a graduate of the Naval Academy, received three years of his educa-

tion at Norwich. During the period from 1894 to 1899 two successive governors of the State of New York had lived at Hanover — L. P. Morton, who began there his business career, and Frank S. Black a graduate of the college. Although most of the New Hampshire emigration tended toward Boston or the West, it happened at the period in question that the proprietor of the best known hotel in New York city was a Hanover man. The editor of the leading newspaper was born in Hanover and educated at the college. Within recent years the district attorney, surrogate, and three judges of the Supreme Court had come from Dartmouth. In the medical profession men born within the Hanover pale and sons of the college were leaders in general medicine, in surgery, and in neurology. Two graduates and presidents of Dartmouth had been pastors of the most influential churches. Men of the same antecedents were at the front in engineering and in business affairs.

It was one of many illustrations of the influence which went out from small communities when the New England stock after the middle of the century spread itself over the land, and it suggests the eager plans and hopes which must have filled the thought of young people in those communities. The opportunity for expansion was offered by the rapid extension of railroads, the building of factories, and the opening of new markets. The discovery of gold on the Pacific coast aggravated the Western fever, and was followed





*From a daguerreotype*

MRS. E. D. SANBORN



by the inspiring events of an Elizabethan age — wars and rumors of wars and a vast romance of discovery and settlement.

It is easy to understand how the young men caught the fever and went out to make their fortunes; but with the young women it was different. Horace Greeley's advice was Go West, young man! There was no reason why an independent career for young women should occur to him. A man's sphere was the round world, but a woman's sphere was in the home. It was the rule of formal tradition that a woman must not intrude upon any field of work which men had preoccupied, particularly if any publicity was involved. The rigid rules of the Puritan regime were enforced by an almost ferocious public sentiment. Wendell Phillips is sometimes quoted as saying that the Puritan hell would be a place where every one had to mind his own business. A minister's wife after a perturbed pastorate in a village of Western Massachusetts, described the place as having the quiet of the grave, without its peace. This less amiable feature of rural life made it almost impossible to do anything out of the ordinary. Cards and dancing were not only inventions of the Devil, but any one who countenanced them was thought to be going to their inventor. Of this Miss Sanborn wrote in the chapter on *Bygones*: "Students were forbidden to play cards, and the enjoyable games of whist or euchre or cribbage were also forbidden in the homes of the faculty. But the

boys played on the sly. Once the inspector, with another teacher, entered a room suddenly where a quiet game was progressing. Lights went out as suddenly as the door had opened; there was a shuffling and a scuffling, and all was still. The culprits were dragged forth from various retreats. A negro had hidden under the bed. 'He need not have done that,' said Professor Putnam, 'he had only to keep dark.' "

An estimable French lady who came to Hanover upon some religious or charitable mission lost her influence and almost her reputation by tossing a rubber ball to her little boy on the Sabbath day. To quote from the *Memories*: "On the Lord's Day children were not allowed to read the *Youth's Companion* or to pluck a flower in the garden. Life then was a solemn business at Hanover; a yearly concert at commencement and typhoid fever in the fall."

In spite of difficulties in the way, Miss Sanborn even as a young girl was inspired by the spirit of the times and made up her mind, as the phrase was, to get out and do something. The principal avenues not entirely closed to young women were in teaching and literary work; and she felt that her unusual advantages in education might be put to practical use in those directions. She had begun the study of Latin at the age of eight years, and under the tutelage of her father and his associates had followed closely the courses of study in school and college. She had been "finished" in music at Andover and in elocution and



Hon<sup>ble</sup> Daniel Webster  
Member of Senate. Saratoga Springs  
20 Sept 1840

#### A SILHOUETTE OF DANIEL WEBSTER

By Edouard, the French silhouettist who came to America in 1840 and made silhouettes of several thousand persons among them Mr. Webster and his nieces





other branches at Boston. The circumstances of her early training were well described in one of the newspaper reviews of her life work :

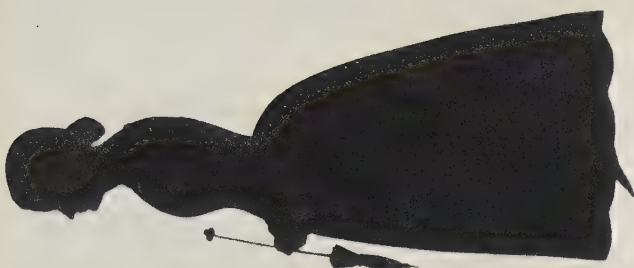
“ Kate Sanborn was born to write. The atmosphere of her youth was literary to the core, and she seized upon the advantages of her surroundings naturally and with conspicuous eagerness, avidity, and adaptability.”

There was also truth in the remark of another reviewer that “ She was educated in that inspired and casual way so frequent in earlier times.” Such methods were characteristic of the period, and as expressed by a writer in the *Providence Journal*, “ Kate Sanborn was one of a group of American women whose cleverness and individuality seem to have belonged particularly to a certain period.” The striking feature of Miss Sanborn’s training was that, before the day of systematic education for women, she adapted herself to conditions as they were, making the utmost of her advantages and finding ways to overcome the disadvantages. In fact she may be said to have been largely self-educated in the sense of seeking out the sources of education and acquiring the taste for books. In later life she wrote half a dozen brief common-sense essays on such subjects as *Tact as a Virtue*, *The Art of Making Gifts*, *Fashion and How Far to Follow It*, and *Making Friends of Books*. They were published by the Society of Christian Endeavor. In the essay last named she said : “ Those old authors were my best friends. In fact, they made my fortune. I go to books when

tired or nervous, and they rest and cheer me ; when worried and anxious, and cares are forgotten ; when I am ill or suffering, they do me as much good as the doctor. They are always the same, never capricious, never ‘ hurt,’ never censorious, never find fault, or gossip ; and between the covers of the right kind of books you will find the sure road to success. Select a subject, and stick to it, making friends of all the books on that theme ; then use the knowledge with enthusiasm and tact, and your success is certain.”

Miss Sanborn had made her first venture as an author when a girl in short frocks, eleven years of age ; having written some bright little stories which were published and paid for. She began her work as a teacher while still in her ‘ teens, opening a school in a long room in the ell of her father’s house, over the wood shed. Here she gathered a few children and made the work of learning so interesting that the number increased to nearly fifty. It was in 1859 when she was twenty years old that her father was called to the Washington University at St. Louis and she was offered the opportunity of teaching classes of girls in the Institute connected with the University.

Returning to Hanover four years later, Miss Kate looked about for other opportunities in writing and teaching. A firm of Boston publishers had started a weekly paper for young people called the *Youth’s Companion*. Thinking it a venture rather beneath their own dignity, they placed at the head of the paper the



1840

1841

1842

1843

1844

1845

1846

1847

1848

1849

1850

1851

1852

1853

1854

A SILHOUETTE BY EDOUARD



name Perry Mason & Co., an entirely imaginary firm of publishers. The *Youth's Companion* became a great success and offered good rewards for contributions. Through the friendly offices of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Miss Sanborn began to write for the *Companion*. Her first story for the children was about a young black and tan dog at home which had taken over the name of Rab. The dog was a character, and his biographer drew a vivid picture of his mischief, faithful friendship and singular adventures. The children enjoyed reading of funny or lovable traits that they had noticed unconsciously in their own pets, but had perhaps never spoken of or put into words. They felt as if it were a story of their own experience. Next Miss Sanborn found material in the activities of her brother and his friends, all about ten years old. They ran home in a great fright after seeing a strange monster in the middle of the river. It stayed near one place, but would rear up its head in an awful way and then dive down. It had long hair and "ears that kept a-floppin'." This beast proved to be a water-soaked log, one end of which had sunk to the bottom while the upper end, upon which drifting weeds and rubbish had lodged, bobbed up and down in the current. The boys finding that their swimming hole was becoming shallow went down below, around a bend, to build a dam. When their backs were well blistered by the sun, they went after their shirts, to find that the cows in the pasture attracted probably by the starch in those

garments, had chewed them to a pulp. They held an indignation meeting and proceeded to the house of the owner of the pasture. They set forth the facts of the outrage and held up some strings of front buttons which were all that was left of the shirts.

“And now what are you going to do about it?”

“Dew abaout it? Nawthin’!”

To be doing nothing is a condition that never applied to Miss Sanborn. Her mind was always full of new plans and of ideas suggested by books or by progressive people. While making use of every opportunity for writing she taught classes of young women at Tilden Seminary in an adjoining town and her experience here decided her to look for broader work in the lecture field. The Lyceum was a power in education which brought all the oratorical Mahomets of the country to the mountains of New England. They were to be envied for their influence and reputation as well as for the agreeable reaction on their pockets. Dr. Chapin used to say that he valued the fame derived from lecturing, F-A-M-E standing for Fifty And My Expenses. Dr. Holmes, as Miss Sanborn reports, having given one of his charming lectures in the missionary spirit at a small place, where no amount had been agreed upon, his charges were discussed with the Lecture Committee. “We had calkerlated,” said the spokesman, “to make it five dollars; but it wa’n’t exactly what we expected, and we have conclooded that tew-fifty would be abaout right!”



Women were barred from the lecture field by reason of its publicity, though a few like Mrs. Livermore by reason of patriotic service during the war were allowed special consideration. Miss Sanborn had given to the girls at Tilden Seminary a series of talks on the English poets which were published in 1868 by the Appletons and attracted attention by their novel style. As the poet Whittier wrote to the author, "Its racy, colloquial style enlivened by anecdote and citation, makes it anything but a dull book." Mr. Whittier also commended its analysis of character and estimates of literary merit. *Home Pictures of English Poets* was passed upon favorably, as to its educational value, for use as a text book in the schools of New York city, but its acceptance was blocked by comments on religions and races that were natural in rural New England but not so well suited to cosmopolitan New York. The success of her talks on literary topics emboldened Miss Sanborn to deliver lectures outside of academic walls. Such a venture was considered unwomanly, and Miss Sanborn records that her father, who was not generally emotional, was moved to tears by severe words of rebuke and criticism. The interest, charm, and wit of the lectures attracted crowded houses, with chairs in the aisles and people sitting on the window sills. Influential friends were found all over New England who sent invitations to the young lecturer. The governor of Vermont invited her to his home town. When at Concord, N. H., she was asked by Dr. Ban-

croft to entertain the inmates of the State Lunatic Asylum. Another (former) state governor now confined in the asylum shook hands with her heartily after the lecture and assured her that it was "just about right for us lunatics." It was a good test of Miss Sanborn's humor that she never missed an opportunity of telling jokes at her own expense.

Having done so well near home, Miss Sanborn made up her mind to seek a broader field. She found a place as teacher in one of the well-known schools for girls in New York, soon making a reputation that brought her an invitation to teach at the Packer Institute in Brooklyn. Here she won the friendship of Anne Lynch, afterwards Mrs. Botta, through whom she was admitted to the acquaintance and sincere regard of a host of interesting and distinguished people, and had now attained all that she asked for, an ample opportunity.

In her early ventures from Hanover and while making her way in New York, Miss Sanborn was still aided by her home associations, especially by the loving encouragement of her sister Mary (Mrs. Paul Babcock) and of her grandmother, Mrs. Ezekiel Webster. To speak of a New England woman of the earlier times as faultless in character might suggest the idea of prim severity or of traits more to be admired than loved. But when the New England type came to its maturity in a broader and more happy life, there were developed among the women in many households,



A HOME-MADE SILHOUETTE TRACED FROM SHADOW PICTURE



characters as nearly perfect as could well be asked for in human nature. Mrs. Webster was born with the nineteenth century and lived to her ninety-sixth year, or almost to the century's end. After the sudden death of her husband in 1829 she never remarried, always cherishing the feeling that "she would rather be the widow of Ezekiel Webster than the wife of any other man." When Miss Sanborn's mother died in 1864 Mrs. Webster took the place of a mother and remained in the household until Miss Kate had gone to New York. If any conceivable grace or charm of mind or person or character was missing in "Grandma Webster," her devoted friends never noticed the omission. Her slight and frail presence was a tower of strength, for into the daily life of shifting scenes and pressing cares it brought a vision of something real and enduring. Yet she was no colorless saint, but was full of alert, practical human interest in the things of everyday life. Mrs. Webster was an expert in backgammon and other games and "as eager to win as a child." Up to the very end of her long life she was the most delightful of companions, and as Miss Sanborn wrote of her, "her life is still a stimulus, an inspiration, a benediction." Her serene spirit and wise encouragement were a never-failing help to Miss Kate as long as she remained at home.

Miss Sanborn's sister Mary, six years younger than herself, was a contrast in appearance and temperament. She inherited the dark hair and complexion of the

Batchelders and a calm unruffled disposition. When the sisters were little children there lived in their home a character known as "Old Henry" who had officiated for years as hired man upon the farm of Professor Sanborn's father. Miss Kate used to delight to recall his comment that "Mary never made him no trouble, but Kate was a 'tarnal torment." While they had many traits in common, there were also qualities that were in a fortunate way complementary. The fact that her sister Mary (Mrs. Babcock) upon her marriage removed to New York, had a great influence on Miss Sanborn's career. It opened a home for her there and furnished invaluable encouragement. All might be said of Mrs. Babcock that has been said of Mrs. Webster, who became a frequent visitor at the Babcock home. They were both ideal friends and helpers, loving a laugh, thinking of everything but themselves and intensely interested in everything worthy of their interest. Mrs. Babcock had received much the same educational training as her sister and believed like her in making friends of books. She enjoyed turning off witty and graceful verses and her serious writing was a model of clear, direct, vigorous English. Her character was of a kind that met every test of trial and affliction. She lost her children, one after another, and then her beloved husband. In her later years she became detached from many interests by serious deafness. Yet by force of character she fixed her mind on sensible and useful interests and followed





*From a later daguerreotype*

MISS SANBORN'S MOTHER



them with the enthusiasm of a girl. A season like Christmas which might naturally be a time for having the blues, she made the culminating event of her year. As Christmas came on, her home became piled with packages which would carry to friends and especially to those who needed remembrance, a reminder of her never-failing smile of hearty greeting. A glimpse of Miss Kate's reliance on the strong and loyal support of her sister appears in the account of her first lecture in New York:

"Through the kind suggestions of Mrs. Botta, I was asked to give talks on literary matters at the house of one of New York's most influential citizens. This I enjoyed immensely. Soon the large drawing-rooms were too small for the numbers who came. Next we went to the Young Women's Christian Association, to the library there, and later I decided to engage the church parlors in Doctor Howard Crosby's church.

"On the day for my first lecture the rain poured down, and I felt sure of a failure. My sister went with me to the church. As we drew near I noticed a string of carriages up and down the avenue. 'There must be a wedding or a funeral,' I whispered, feeling more in the mood of the latter, but never dreaming how much those carriages meant to me. As I went timidly into the room I found nearly every seat full, and was greeted with cordial applause. My sister took a seat beside me. My subject was *Spinster Authors of England*. My hands trembled so visibly that I laid my manu-

script on the table, but after getting in magnetic touch with those before me, I did not mind. The reporters whom I found sharpening their pencils expectantly, gave correct and complimentary notices and my success was now assured."

The following outline of Miss Sanborn's life, particularly after she had made a place for herself in New York, is taken from the *Boston Transcript* of July 9, 1917:

Miss Sanborn's education was remarkably broad and thorough for a girl of that time. While little more than a girl she began educational work herself, teaching at several schools in New York and at the Packer Institute in Brooklyn. She was invited to pass a winter in the home of Mrs. Vincenzo Botta of New York, who gathered around her table and at her "Saturday evenings" the most distinguished men and women of the day. Here Miss Sanborn attracted friendships by her keen wit, vivacity and originality, and began to form an acquaintance with interesting people which widened throughout her life.

It was through the influence of Mrs. Botta that she became a pioneer among women in the lecture field. She hit upon attractive titles for her lectures, such as *Spinster Authors of England*, *Bachelor Authors in Types*, *Literary Gossips*, *Are Women Witty?*, *Tortures from Terrific Talkers*, *Unintentional Nonsense*, *The Perils and Benefits of Egotism*, and *Our Early Newspaper Wits*. Miss Sanborn had the rare gift of getting at the gist of a subject as well as of condensing her material. Her style was both graceful and effective and always brightened by her sense of humor. The success of her lectures and of her classes in current literature was also due to her fine, magnetic presence and to the charm of her well-trained voice.

In 1880 Miss Sanborn was invited to Smith College as professor of English literature, a position which she filled



PROFESSOR SANBORN AT THE AGE OF SEVENTY





for three years, made additionally busy by lecturing and literary work. After leaving Smith College she made a lecturing tour through the Middle West. Following a breakdown in health she became interested in an old farm at Metcalf, Mass., about 25 miles from Boston. After several years of outdoor life she told her experiences in *Adopting an Abandoned Farm*, a book which had a large sale and took its place among American works of humor. Later she removed to another farm nearby which became her permanent summer home.

In spite of infirmities which would have depressed most people, Miss Sanborn devoted herself with never-failing energy and enthusiasm to beautifying the place, to practical farming and housekeeping, to congenial literary work and to the entertainment of friends. Her controlling impulse seemed to be the wish to be of service to those about her, especially to those who most needed help.

During her life on the farm Miss Sanborn wrote a number of books upon subjects which especially interested her—*The Wit of Women*, *Old Time Wall Papers* and *My Literary Zoo*. She became interested in the statues of Indians once so commonly used as the signs of tobacconists, and issued an illustrated booklet under the title *Hunting Indians with a Taxicab*. She was always an appreciative friend of dogs, and in the last year of her life brought out a handsomely illustrated book entitled *Educated Dogs of To-day*. In 1915 Miss Sanborn collected her reminiscences of interesting persons, under the title *Memories and Anecdotes*. Though her strength at that time hardly permitted careful arrangement or revision, the book sketched an unusual and inspiring career and presented vivid pen pictures of such men as Emerson, Beecher, Greeley, Mark Twain, John Hay, James T. Fields, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Wendell Phillips, Walt Whitman and William Cullen Bryant; and of such women as Julia Ward Howe, Harriet Hosmer, Mary A. Livermore and Frances Willard.

Miss Sanborn's talent for presenting compact information in attractive form appears in her little volume *A Truthful*

*Woman in Southern California*, that State being a region for which she felt strong attachment. A favorite diversion was the making up of calendars, several of which were books of permanent value, containing selections on special subjects, chosen with critical judgment from a wide variety of authors. Miss Sanborn was repaid for this work by the letters constantly received from grateful readers of the *Indian Summer Calendar* (selections on the Indian summer of life) and of *The Starlight Calendar*, on the faith in immortality. In fact few persons have so large a personal correspondence. The ladies who had been her pupils at the Packer Institute and at Smith College formed of themselves a large group of lifelong friends who never missed an opportunity of showing their appreciation and attachment.

Miss Sanborn truly believed that in one's relations to life the mere passing of years has little to do with age. In her later years she again took up her residence in New York, but returned to the farm in summer. On the day before she was stricken with fatal illness she was never more animated or full of the enjoyment of life and of energetic plans for the future. One of her last acts was to administer a bracing talk to a caller who came in a despondent mood and complained that he had nothing to live for. Kate Sanborn had reached age but could never have become a victim of old age. When nearly unconscious she repeated what a friend had written in a recent letter—*Be as young as you always have been.*

The features of special interest in Miss Sanborn's career as outlined in the *Transcript* have been more fully pictured in her *Memories*. It has been remarked by more than one of those who knew her intimately that she had a wonderful life. Amelia E. Barr wrote to her: "I think you have been a fortunate woman, and, 'it sounds like stories from the land of spirits if any man obtains that which he merits.'" It was a re-

markable experience for a young woman coming from her quiet country home to receive so rapid recognition; to be offered a place in a school of the highest rank; to make an immediate success of large classes in current literary topics; to be invited for the classes and for lectures to such homes as those of Dr. J. G. Holland and President Barnard of Columbia; to attract crowded audiences of the "best people" at public lectures; to succeed Mark Twain in conducting the humorous department of a leading magazine; to be chosen as instructor in English literature at Smith College; to make a tour of lecturing through the West which was literally a series of ovations; to be able to retire to an ideal life upon a New England farm and to enjoy a long Indian summer in congenial literary work and in the entertainment of interesting guests. In the tribute in the *Transcript* from which citations have been made, Miss Sanborn was described as teacher, author, lecturer, humorist, optimist, and advocate of country living. No doubt it was a natural result of Miss Sanborn's marked individuality and her impatience of narrow and formal methods that she became a pioneer in her several interests. This was especially true of her methods as a teacher. In the *Brooklyn Eagle* of July 15, 1917, there was an appreciative notice, occupying several columns, from the pen of a critical writer who was familiar with her work at the Packer Institute. He says:

"Very early Miss Sanborn chose teaching for her

profession. She seems to have been a born teacher, an unconscious teacher if the records of her experience at Packer are to be taken as a criterion of her experience elsewhere. Although Miss Sanborn in her naive account of her examination for the position at Packer seemed not to realize it, she doubtless established a new method of teaching which has been followed at Packer with such signal success ever since the day of her ordeal half a century ago. Miss Sanborn was a pioneer among women lecturers, and her experiences as given in her last book, *Memories and Anecdotes* — an autographic copy of which Miss Sanborn presented to Packer recently — are witty in the extreme, and so vivid are her character sketches of those she met in her lecture experiences that one seems personally to know the friends of the author and to have traveled with her far afield. The author-lecturer seemed to have a peculiar ability for getting at the bottom facts or hitting the nail on the head, and with all her clear thinking there was always the leaven of mirth that lifted the plainest statement of facts into the realm of good literature. Miss Sanborn may also be credited as being first in the field of talks upon current literature or topical talks. For years before this popular way of imparting facts to other women came into fashion under the name of current events classes, Miss Sanborn was in effect doing the very thing that now occupies cultured women everywhere. Horace Greeley and Henry Ward Beecher were among the friends and asso-



MRS. EZEKIEL WEBSTER





ciates of Miss Sanborn and it is doubtful if she received more mental nourishment from them than she imparted—for those of Brooklyn who still remember her say that she was never dull, and still so fine was her sense of proportion and of fitness of things that she never for all her cleverness became pedantic or seemed aught than a delightful comrade, ready to give her best for those who needed her gifts of heart or head. She was for the full allotted span associated with education, and was successful in the highest degree as a maker of books, a lecturer, and teacher.”

Miss Sanborn herself gives some glimpses of her freedom from what she described as “teachery” formality. “It was a great opportunity to help young girls to read in such a way that it would be a pleasure to their home friends, or to recite naturally in company as was then common. We gave an exhibition of what they could do in reading and recitation, and the chapel was crowded to the doors. I offered to give in my classes lessons in ‘How to tell a story’ with ease, brevity, and point, promising in every case to give an anecdote of my own suggested by theirs. This pleased them, and we had a jolly time. The first girl who was called upon told a story of her grandfather who was very deaf. ‘You may have seen him sitting on the pulpit stairs of Mr. Beecher’s church holding to his ear what looks like a skillet. Once when wakened in the middle of the night he went down stairs and cautiously opened the kitchen door. He reached out his skillet trumpet

before him at the partly opened door, and the milkman poured in a quart of milk.' The girl was applauded and deserved it. Then they asked me for a milk story. I told them of a milkman who in answer to a young mother who complained that the milk he brought for her baby was sour, replied : ' Well, is there anything outside of the sourness that doesn't suit you ?'

" We had many visitors interested in the work of the various classes. One day Beecher strolled into the chapel and wished to hear some of the girls read. All were ready. One took the morning paper ; another recited a poem ; one read a selection from her scrap-book. Beecher afterward inquired : ' Whom have you got to teach elocution now ? You used to have a few prize pumpkins on show, but now every girl is doing good original work.' "

At Smith College Miss Sanborn applied to the higher education the same purpose by which she had inspired her younger pupils — to interest the student, to teach her to think for herself and to gain ideas that should make life more worth the living. " I used no special text book while at Smith College, and requested my class to question me for ten minutes at the close of every recitation. Each girl brought a commonplace book to the recitation room to take notes as I talked. Some of them showed great power of expression while writing on the themes provided. There was a monthly examination, often largely attended by friends from out of town."



MRS. MARY SANBORN BABCOCK



Dr. L. Clarke Seelye, who was then and for many years the President of Smith College, in writing of Miss Sanborn's service says: "She was a stimulating and original teacher and a delightful companion." One of her Northampton friends, writing in the *Hampshire Gazette* of July 19th, expresses the same ideas more fully: "With the death of Kate Sanborn on July 9th, one of the most striking personalities of that little group of sincere workers who comprised the faculty of Smith College during its early days passed away. Kate Sanborn, working by her own methods, inspired her pupils with her own enthusiasm for English literature, so stimulating their curiosity and directing its gratification that many of them have borne testimony to a life-long appreciation of the best books that they owed to her. She was always a leader rather than a taskmaster, and her success as a teacher was due no less to her intimate knowledge of literature than to her own winning charm, her quick wit, and her force of character." One of her former pupils wrote to her not long ago, "You did more for me than any teacher I had at Smith, for you kindled my imagination and knocked out of me some New England conventionalities." Another lady who when a student in the college assisted Miss Sanborn in some of her literary work, and is especially qualified to express the feeling of her pupils, has written recently:

"To me she was most inspiring. She not only made her own subject interesting, but she related it to many

other subjects. Many vistas she opened for me for which I shall ever be grateful. Her enthusiasm, her keen sense of humor, her unexpected turns of expression, and her freedom from conventional methods of teaching did much to unlock my reserved New England temperament. In short, I gained from her more that has proved of real value to me than from any teacher I ever had."

While at Northampton Miss Sanborn devised her "Round Table" series of literature lessons which is evidence of the thorough and systematic qualities of her scholarship. In the form of charts she condensed an immense fund of instructive information applying to each of twenty-five periods in English literature, accompanied by suggestions for study of the period, lists of special readings, subjects for essays, characterizations of each author and of each school, choice quotations and notes of important events. As one critic said, "It shows marvellous power of concentration and monumental drudgery." These literature lessons, which have been out of print, are to be republished by an educator who was impressed with their value and will be made permanently useful.

In the delivery of her lectures Miss Sanborn's personality played as important a part as in her teaching. She was regarded with admiration and affection by her women contemporaries who were active in literary or other work, and vivid pictures of Miss Sanborn as a lecturer are found in letters written by those ladies.





MISS SANBORN WHILE A TEACHER AT SMITH COLLEGE



Mrs. Abba Goold Woolson wrote : “ Miss Sanborn’s lectures are a delight to her listeners; and that she enjoys them herself no one can doubt who watches the bright, animated face and sparkling eyes with which she communicates her thoughts, and which serve to give an added meaning and piquancy to her wit. She deals with literary topics that are out of the common course, and her style of treatment is always fresh and original. Solid information there is in abundance, but it is enlivened by sudden flashes of wit, and a pervading atmosphere of good humor and good sense. Her enunciation is something admirable; the tones are pure, the words clear-cut, even to the last consonant, and uttered with ease and naturalness.”

Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton wrote of Miss Sanborn’s lectures in Boston : “ She has a charming presence; a voice rich, sweet, and exquisitely modulated, and the very unusual power of imparting alike the utmost expression to pathos, and the keenest point to an epigram. The first lecture to which I listened — *The Pets of Great Men*—delighted me by its freshness and brightness; but the second—*Vanity and Insanity, the Shadows of Genius*—held me absorbed in a yet deeper interest. The wealth of illustration which enriched these lectures was marvellous. The weaknesses of the great men were touched so piquantly, yet so tenderly, and the tragedies that darkened their lives were dwelt upon so reverently and so sympathetically, that one was constantly compelled to the closest sympathy.”

In looking back upon Miss Sanborn's work as an author, one is struck by her versatility and her wide range of interests. She wrote educational works upon literature, a book of travel and observation in Southern California, a volume upon old-time wall papers, a psychological study entitled *The Vanity and Insanity of Genius*, practical and humorous books upon farm life, and a study of the educational capacity of dogs. All these varied themes were subjects in which the author felt an intense interest, and her literary work in every case was the expression of her animated and inspiring nature. As was said by "The Nomad" of the *Boston Transcript*: "Those who read her very own books read the woman and found her a well of sunshine that no disappointment or sickness or sorrow could permanently darken."

A large number of the press notices which appeared after Miss Sanborn's death recognized the serious value of her writings upon farm life. An article in the *New Haven Register* of July 11th, under the title *A New England Humorist*, speaks of her as "a pioneer in the 'back to the farm' movement which of late years has taken so firm a hold upon the people of this country. Undoubtedly Kate Sanborn's *Adopting an Abandoned Farm*, aside from its humorous qualities, did more to turn the attention of New England people to the possibilities of escape from the rush and bustle of the cities than any other book published at the time. The book has taken its place among the stand-

ard works of American humor.” Under the title *A Literary Farmer*, the *Tribune* of Providence, Rhode Island, of July 12th says: “It is many years since the publication of that absorbingly interesting book, *Adopting an Abandoned Farm*, but its author lived long enough to see a full realization of its object—and many a demonstration of the fact that women, even literary women, can make farming pay and retain their self-respect. It is reasonable to think that she derived less satisfaction from her success in strictly literary endeavor than from seeing her ideas of farming adopted and practised by many American women.” In the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* it was remarked that “Many followed her example in seeking out old places and turning them into homes fit to live in. The movement was a beneficial one in all respects, and it helped to engender a taste for country life which has been an important factor in the present efforts to increase the store of food.”

Here is an example of Miss Sanborn’s serious and sensible advice :

“I want now to talk seriously about farming as a paying and satisfactory business for women. I notice in papers and magazines amateurish, optimistic articles on this theme which have had a false and dangerous influence upon the piteous army of impecunious and unemployed women who are eagerly looking for something to do and some practical method of self-support. These articles speak of ‘dairying’ as pleasant

and profitable; poultry, mushrooms, violets, market gardening, etc.—treating all in an airy, fairy fashion that shows little intimacy with the truth of it.

“To begin with, dairying is not a business that can well be carried on by women. As an honest farmer said to me: ‘I wouldn’t bother with too many cows. They’re allus a-goin’ out or a-comin’ in, or a-dryin’ up, or farrar or chokin’ themselves, or losin’ their cud, or gettin’ out o’ paster, or may be inclined to hookin’, and they die easy, though they look tough.’

“No desirable man can be hired for small wages, and valuable cows range in price from fifty to three hundred dollars. One must have capital to commence. It is hard to find a market, at least a paying market, for milk; harder to collect the money.

“The romantic word pictures in novels of rosy milkmaids, snowy arms, dimpled elbows, pretty white aprons, golden butter, yellow cream, red lips, cool, shaded dairy, rows of shining, well-filled pans, are attractive, but the reality is vastly different—at least in Metcalf!

“For those who seriously contemplate cows as an easy means of support, I would suggest that they first try to lead two frisky, frightened calves from the pasture to the barn when a sudden thunder-storm is on and your so-called ‘help’ has not returned from Rumford, and the nine cows are vociferously entreating some one to do the milking. I have known that experience. Or to churn on some hot, ‘muggy’ morning, when the





MISS SANBORN AFTER BEGINNING HER ACTIVE LIFE  
AS TEACHER AND LECTURER



butter won't 'come' in three, or five, or seven minutes, as usual ; and with weary arms on you go, turn-itty-turn, chunk-atty-chunk, round and round, round and round, trying in vain a pinch of salt, a little bit of warm water, a small piece of ice, etc., and at last to set the contents of the churn down cellar for a few hours, then boil it, let it cool, and finally give it to the hens. That also I have endured. The hens like it, but hardly appreciate my efforts. Dairying is one perpetual job, and one needs to be a Job to master it.

"Then, poultry farming is a life study, a profound art. Nine-tenths lose and give up who attempt it. If I should circumstantially describe the history of my four hundred fall chickens you would better realize the myriad difficulties in this direction.

"I can not advise any woman to go into farming or poultry or dairy business, unless she has a certain income and is willing to work hard and endure much. She must war eternally with insects, animals, and birds, and expect imposition on every hand. There are compensations which almost balance these hostile forces, but they will only be found by the genuine lover of country life.

"I ask most thoughtfully, can nothing be done to make the farmers' wives of the next generation a little—no, a great deal—more happy, and to prevent the causes of such overwork?"

From this Miss Sanborn went on to practical advice and constructive suggestions for women looking for-

ward to a country life; and to thoughtful ideas for the betterment of farm life, particularly from the point of view of farmers' wives and daughters. Her correspondence on the subject continued to be large for many years.

There was nothing in the resources of her country home which Miss Sanborn valued more than the opportunity which it gave for entertaining her friends. She not only invited friends for a day or a week-end, but often entertained clubs and groups, such as the Boston Authors Club, and the Club of New Hampshire Women, and associations of teachers. She several times invited all the people of the neighborhood to come to her home to make or renew their acquaintance with her and to see and discuss what she had been able to do in restoring an abandoned farm. Mr. A. E. Winship, editor of the *Journal of Education*, wrote of these affairs:

"But that which endeared her to her friends more than perhaps anything else were her 'occasions' at the abandoned farm, where one met noted people whom he never would have met elsewhere. Those were always 'Occasions' with a big O. Fun, such fun as we could have nowhere else, and big men and women became frisky children for the day."

Miss Sanborn always believed in saying encouraging and appreciative things to others, and she frankly enjoyed appreciation herself. In *Abandoning an Adopted*



THE FIRESIDE AT BREEZY MEADOWS





*Farm* she quotes several "bread and butter" letters from noted men in Boston.

"It was a great day. I enjoyed it hugely. I gave up my choice of three great banquets, but I would not have missed your luxurious lark for three times three times those ordinary hotel spreads. In this busy life it is not everything that sticks, but your day will abide as a story for my children's children."

And from another letter :

"I never had so good a time in all my life before. Never did nine consecutive hours go so swiftly and delightfully. Everything was perfect. Weather made to order. Every detail was carried out. Your farm was fairyland. Alhambra, a little touch of Venice, all combined; every stone so immaculate; the old barn so trim and tidy; the narrow sidewalk so prim; the decorated grounds, with stacks of hay-rakes and strings of lanterns, so bewitchingly attractive; those sheaves of ripened grain; the teeter, the 'room for two,' the lake so neatly stoned up all round, the triumphal arch, the dinner, the whole thing absolutely delightful and unrepeatable — once only in a lifetime."

Of nature study, Miss Sanborn wrote :

"I cannot write scientifically or in long, detailed observations of the habits and manners of birds; could never spend a whole afternoon lying on a hill concealed by bushes and armed with an opera glass, and then report accurately all I saw. Life is too short for me to care to learn the languages of birds or monkeys,

or carry a phonograph into the henyards. But I love birds and value their friendship. I even aspire to a nest for myself in one of the gigantic twin elms that meet over the northern driveway. There, on an aerial platform, embowered and shaded, with cool breezes to refresh and exhilarate, I may yet have a 'high tea' for a few favored friends. I do not object to the theory of arboreal ancestry, and only wish I had not lost the art of climbing . . . .

"Yes, it is summer now. The birds tell me that, and the trees they love to live in. I am glad to say that my new farm, with its brooks and groves and large solitary trees, is a paradise for birds. They seem to have a sense of proprietorship. In the great drooping elm just south of the house there is a colony of nests. I see the Baltimore oriole below, and above the golden-winged woodpecker. The quick flash of their wings and their loud, cheery call contrast charmingly with the quiet-flitting and rich, low notes of the brilliant 'hang-bird.' There is a long, dead limb of the same tree, honey-combed by woodpeckers of the past, now the abode of a tribe of tree swallows. They too have adopted an abandoned home, and in still evenings they twitter and circle about in the enthusiasm of entomological research; not so bold and sweeping in their flight as their cousins and neighbors who prefer my chimneys, and spoil my newly painted fireplaces with dropping soot and broken eggs.

"In a large hollow of the old elm there was a nest

GROUP OF ARBORS





of little owls. I have seen several fly-catchers in a pear tree near the brook. May they be blessed with large appetites ! And the robins, lots of them, started house-keeping with me. I sympathize with a remark of the late Senator Stanford. When his gardener told him that the robins were getting his whole crop of cherries, he said : ‘Ah ! Why, then, we must plant more cherry trees.’ I sit on the porch at twilight and listen to the whip-poor-will, the catbird, and the quail, but the robin’s song is the best of all.”

It was not easy for Miss Sanborn to disregard her humorous outlook on life even when writing on serious subjects. A writer in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* of July 11th, in commenting on this difficulty which attends all humorists whether in literature or politics, says : “She was humorously indignant over the humorous way in which her serious efforts were misunderstood. Her humorous tendencies were strong, and she asserted that they handicapped her, and yet a leading reviewer has said that ‘next to Julia Ward Howe no woman so finely interpreted the intellectual life.’ ”

In many of the press notices Miss Sanborn is spoken of as the leading woman humorist of America. Though her humor was such a marked characteristic, its quality is so familiar to her friends that there is little need to dwell upon it. She had both wit and humor, and the wit often showed itself in sharp, sudden flashes, of which Miss Frances Willard said, “Its play is like

that of summer lightning on the clouds, so quick, varied and irradiant." She believed in puns within reasonable limits, and in her lecture on *Bachelor Authors*, in speaking of the hymn writer Isaac Watts, she produced a pun which might well claim the record for its number of words. In the New England churches of her childhood there were upon the racks in every pew copies of *Watts' and Select Hymns*. Referring to his fate as a bachelor, Miss Sanborn remarked that it was rather curious no lady seemed to care for Watts and select him. Her friends would probably agree that Miss Sanborn's most delightful humor came out in her lively and spontaneous talks. In her *Memories and Anecdotes* in the description of the Princess Massalsky, known under the pen name of Dora D'Istria, there is a good example of her colloquial style in the vivid portrayal of a humorous situation. Dora D'Istria, whom Miss Sanborn had made the subject of one of her lectures, was an extraordinary woman, widely known in Europe as author, philanthropist, traveler, artist and advocate of freedom. The quotation was well applied to her that "she looked like Venus and spoke like Minerva." When Dora D'Istria came to America, Miss Sanborn, writing in her seventy-sixth year, says:

"I called on her at a seashore hotel near Boston. She had just finished her lunch, and said she had been enjoying for the first time boiled corn on the cob. She was sitting on the piazza, rather shabbily dressed, her



skirt decidedly travel-stained. Traces of the butter used on the corn were visible about her mouth and she was smoking a very large and strong cigar. A rocking chair was to her a delightful novelty and she had already bought six large rocking chairs of wicker-work. She was sitting in one and busily swaying back and forward and said: 'Here I do repose myself and I take these chairs home with me and when de gentlemen and de ladies do come to see me in Florence, I show them how to repose themselves.'

"Suddenly she looked at me and began to laugh immoderately. 'Oh,' she explained, seeing my puzzled expression, 'I deed think of you as so deefferent; I deed think you were very tall and theen, with leetle, wiggly curls on each side of your face.' She evidently had in mind the typical old maid with gimlet ringlets. So we sat and rocked and laughed, for I was equally surprised to meet a person so 'deefferent' from my romantic ideal. Like the two Irishmen, who chancing to meet were each mistaken in the identity of the other, and as one of them put it, 'We looked at each other and, faith, it turned out to be nayther of us.'"

Of Miss Sanborn's book on Southern California, which combined truth and humor, the *Los Angeles Times* of July 10 says: "Miss Sanborn found that this land, at which she poked good-natured fun and on which she bestowed clever praise, benefited her health and she returned again and again, making many friends and avowing herself to be 'fascinated by that summer

land of Hellenic skies and hills of Hymettus, with its paradoxical antithesis of flowers and flannels, strawberries and sealskin sacks, orange blossoms and snow-capped mountains, where winter looks down upon summer; a topsy-turvy land where you dig for your wood and climb for your coal; where squirrels live in the ground while rats build in trees, and rivers flow bottom side up, invisible most of the time; a land where you go outdoors in December to get warm, and where boys in December may snowball butterflies on the tops of the mountains.' "

The kindly feeling of Miss Sanborn's many friends in California is expressed in a tribute of the *Pasadena Star-News* of July 10: "Kate Sanborn will never see California again, and Pasadena will never welcome her, bringing her fresh, tireless, vivid enthusiasm to new fields. Death came quietly to her on Sunday at the beloved farm at Holliston, the farm with its fields and trees, its dogs and horses and pets that she loved. The keen, witty, ever-youthful spirit slipped away softly to seek new adventures, and the going brought a sense of personal loss to hundreds of those who were proud to call her friend."

A stranger looking over a file of the reviews of Miss Sanborn's books would be struck with the extraordinarily favorable tone of the comment. It is true that her experience with publishers and critics was exceptional, and the uniformity of favorable criticism is a fact which forms a part of any estimate of her work.



MISS SANBORN AT THE DOOR OF BREEZY MEADOWS



The easy good-fellowship of her style, its freedom from anything formal or artificial or self-conscious, the good-humored, but slap-dash attacks upon all sorts of solemn humbug, the compact values underlying the attractive style—all help to explain the friendly welcome which awaited Miss Sanborn's writings. Although Miss Sanborn was a constant writer of books and contributor to newspapers and periodicals, she could say in looking back over an experience of fifty years, that she had never had a manuscript of any kind refused. It was never her fate to receive one of the printed slips of polite regret which are thought to be the common lot of authors. Most of the critics of her style speak of its easy and familiar qualities. Professor Fred Lewis Pattee, author of a recent critical work upon American literature, wrote of Miss Sanborn's style :

“It is like a week-end visit with those who before were to me all too often mere books and abstractions. You make them alive—persons whom you make to appear like personal friends.”

“We thought we knew a few of the men and women described in *Memories and Anecdotes*,” was the comment of another reviewer, “but after their being revealed by Miss Sanborn, we must acknowledge that they were merely passing acquaintances until she spoke words which caused them to open their hearts to us.”

“A delightful and refined literary style,” “sparkling wit and good-natured sarcasm ;” “splendid scholarship

and high ideals;” “a blending of humor and common sense, forming a style which is exquisitely delightful”—these are fair examples of the general characterization of Miss Sanborn’s work as a writer. The following comment will appeal to all who knew Miss Sanborn, either through her conversation or her writings:

“Kate Sanborn sees and sets forth with the clear eye and skilful hand of genius such things as everyone has experienced, but no one had thought to tell of.”

And in similar vein another critic remarked :

“Probably as funny people and as funny things are happening to everybody as to Kate Sanborn, but she has the rare facility of seizing the fun and turning it over for the amusement of her friends.”

Miss Sanborn also appropriated to her own use the amusing happenings of her experience, and was often accustomed to draw upon them when some special trait or resource was called into play. Such was the case of the “old fellow” mentioned in her *Bygone Sketches*, “tall, lank, thin, with a narrow head and long straight hair, to whom my father gave many articles of clothing. I was in my father’s study when Professor Sanborn, finding nothing else available, had bestowed an old high hat of abnormal size. It was tried on and the head of the visitor was completely obscured. The hat rested on his shoulders, only a few wisps of the long hair which he wore in a thin imitation of distinguished clergymen and statesmen being visible at the neck.



“‘You can’t wear that’, said my father, decidedly.

“‘It *is* a leetle large,’ said the grateful recipient, reappearing from beneath the extinguisher, ‘but I guess I’ll take it along. My hair may thicken up.’”

Thereafter whenever circumstances looked particularly unpromising Miss Sanborn was wont to remark with a cheerful smile that something better “may thicken up.”

Or she might in such a case fall back upon the phrase of an early instructor who came to Dartmouth to teach the modern languages of foreign parts, and whose own acquaintance with English had not become discriminating. He came in one day to report the demise of a near and dear friend, and exclaimed in his utter dejection, “I am vere mooch disgosted.”

So of the solemn individual who had retired from business to engage in the cultivation of swine, and who introduced himself in calling upon Miss Sanborn, by saying, “We have a common bond of interest—hogs.”

So also of the excited person with whom there had been a discussion over some business transaction, who walked up hurriedly from Metcalf station, flourishing papers in his hands, and exclaiming, “I’ve got the dockermunts, Miss Metcalf, I’ve got the dockermunts.”

Miss Kate liked also to recall the mental picture of a faithful coachman, a huge Irishman, whom from her upper windows she saw and heard standing off some bore or agent who was insisting on an interview: “I tell yer,” he said, “Miss Sanborn’s not at home.

She's gone away to the Adonoracks or somewhere."

Perhaps nothing was more often remarked upon by those who talked with Miss Sanborn or reviewed her literary work than her inexhaustible fund of anecdotes, illustrations and apt citations. It had been her good fortune to know an unusual number of famous raconteurs, and their stories were filed away in her retentive memory, to be brought out as circumstances might suggest. The interesting people of literary history, such as Dr. Johnson, Sidney Smith, Charles Lamb, Tom Hood, Theodore Hook, Madame DeStael and Lady Morgan, were almost as real to her as were living people. She had at her tongue's end everything that had been written by or about such persons, and seemed almost to carry on conversations with them.

Miss Sanborn gained recognition in other lines of literary work than the writing of books. In the notices of her career she was often described as a journalist. For most of her active life she was a contributor to some newspaper, writing a weekly letter on current events, or a column of literary comment, or a department of book reviews. To fill any bits of spare time in her busy life she had a number of literary diversions, such as printing at the end of the year a string of stories about the unusual or ludicrous incidents of farm life, and sending the leaflets to friends at Christmas. She always liked selective work, as shown in her calendars, some of which, as well as *My Literary Zoo* and her volume on the *Wit of*

*Women*, were worthy of being called anthologies. In making up all these volumes of selections which appealed to her, Miss Sanborn's guide was her optimism, and her controlling thought was expressed in the preface to her *Sunshine Calendar*: "Modern authors indulge altogether too much in the morbid and unintelligible. Pessimism is contemptible and cowardly in print or in life."

The *Somerville Journal*, to which Miss Sanborn had contributed book reviews and weekly letters, calls attention to another field in which she did pioneer service:

"Miss Sanborn was one of the pioneer club women of Massachusetts, having been the founder and first president of the New Hampshire Daughters. She was a member of Sorosis of New York, and the Boston Authors Club, and had recently been made an honorary member of the Professional Women's Club of Boston." The association with the club women of her native state was an especially valued experience.

Naturally Miss Sanborn was among the first to realize the new era which was opening for women. She felt that adaptation to the changing conditions must be a matter of time, but there was no more vigorous advocate of a "square deal" for women. "She has always rejoiced," says a writer in the *Louisville Post*, "in the achievements of women, and her ardent feminism has been more effective than we realize."

In looking at Miss Sanborn's life as a whole, it

seems possible to trace the same influences that had moulded her character in the early years at home. At that time, when the Puritan race had reached its mellow maturity and before its blood was thinned by emigration, it developed among its other homemade products a friendly spirit of neighborliness. A good example was the shrewd, kindly, old-fashioned country doctor like those at Hanover. Such a man was a living tonic, knowing all about his patients and bracing them up by the mental medicine of his hearty, magnetic personality. Miss Sanborn never lost this human, neighborly, thoughtful interest. The number of her friends who felt their dependence upon her sane and stimulating counsel was surprising. Her tremendous energy and her wholesome ambition to be doing something worth while seemed to grow with her years. No doubt one of the reasons for her success was her carrying into a life of broad activities the natural, direct manners and concrete human interests of her early surroundings. This was well brought out by the literary critic of the *Boston Herald* in reviewing one of her books:

“Miss Kate Sanborn is a natural Yankee woman, and whatever subject she may take up is sure to be enlivened by her wit and humor. She touches no subject without leaving it in a different light from what it was in before. It is the perpetual mingling of the Yankee woman and the woman of the world which surprises and delights one. She is almost the only living

writer in New England among women who can write entertainingly for the amusement of her readers.”

At the time when she began her work, the Yankee traits of ingenuity and invention had broadened in their scope and New England was sending out men who were pioneers and originators — men like General Dodge and Senator Morrill, who have been mentioned as coming from the Hanover region. General Dodge was literally a roadbuilder, for he was the chief engineer of the first railroad to the Pacific. Justin S. Morrill, whose friendship Miss Sanborn prized so highly, was a striking instance of the men who originate policies of lasting and expanding influence. The far-reaching effect of his Act to Establish Colleges for Agricultural, Scientific, and Industrial Purposes is only beginning to be realized. Miss Sanborn was inspired by the same fine enthusiasm as these men whom she saw going out into the world and achieving noble careers. She broke through the limitations by which the women of her time were hampered, and became herself in many worthy fields, a pathfinder and pioneer. The natural measures of a strong personality seem to be the range of its influence and the sort of impression it has left upon other people. Those who are widely known are generally persons who have appeared habitually before the public or have gained attention by some great discovery or achievement, or in case of literary people, those who have written popular works of fiction. Miss Sanborn many years ago,



retired from the lecture field, and the books which she wrote were generally such as appealed to some special interest. Yet it has often been remarked that her influence was to a surprising extent far-reaching and persistent. She was known in almost every part of the country, and her memory is cherished for her bright and discriminating views of life and for her sane and helpful suggestions in regard to ways of living. In Boston she was intimately known and a few additional comments from Boston newspapers may aid in giving a just idea of the esteem in which she was held.

*The Advertiser* of July 11th said: "Human, humorous, delightful and lovable Kate Sanborn has been carried away from this world of strife, and our elders who found invigorating enjoyment in her spirited humor, pungent pricks at all that was artificial in life, and contagious optimism, will miss a 'best friend.' She is an admirable example of the importance of industry as a help to inheritances of talent and humor. Before she went to Smith College as a teacher, she got worlds of experience teaching and lecturing about the country; and her sparkling humor made her friends with all she met. Always a 'homey' woman, she found nothing in life so good as caring for her quaint house and beautiful farm at Metcalf. She lived as she wrote, simply, wisely, and well. Her Metcalf neighbors considered the week ill spent if Kate Sanborn didn't have them over for an hour of real New



England talk, punctuated by sober war thoughts and relieved by her ready wit."

It is the comment of the *Traveler* of July 10 that "The little band associated with the 'Augustan Age' of literature in this country is diminished by the death of Kate Sanborn. She was a well-established essayist when Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and Thoreau were in their prime. She was a student of literature and a pungent analyst of life."

The *Post* of the same date says, "The passing of Kate Sanborn leaves a gap in the pleasurable memories of our people. For more than two generations, the name of Kate Sanborn has stood for so much of that which makes for inspiration, for delight, for counsel in the intimate relations of life, and for instruction also in literary understanding, that the loss is widely felt to be personal. The work of Miss Sanborn is memorable for its force in the direction of the thought, the purpose, the inspiration of our people. Hers was a long life, approaching closely the limit of the Psalmist, and in it she won a place very near, not only to the people to whom she immediately spoke, but to those of us who follow her."

Miss Sanborn's dear and honored friend, Miss Edna Dean Proctor, has crystalized the description of her character in a tribute written for the *Granite Monthly* of Concord, New Hampshire: "A warm heart, a valiant spirit, trenchant yet kindly wit, and keen insight, love of work and high ambition, were combined

in her to form a unique, delightful, vivid personality. Her books, her generousities, her brilliant sallies, her loyal friendships will long be treasured by her host of friends. Asking one who knew her well what single adjective would best describe her, the answer was, 'Refreshing.' This was most true of her. There was nothing monotonous or stereotyped about her. Her entrance into a room was like a cool breeze springing up in a tropic day. Who that has enjoyed her hospitality can ever forget her home and her?—so gracious, so hearty she was—so lavish of her treasures for the pleasure of her guests. Such welcome be hers in her new life as she gave her friends in this!"

mis.













